

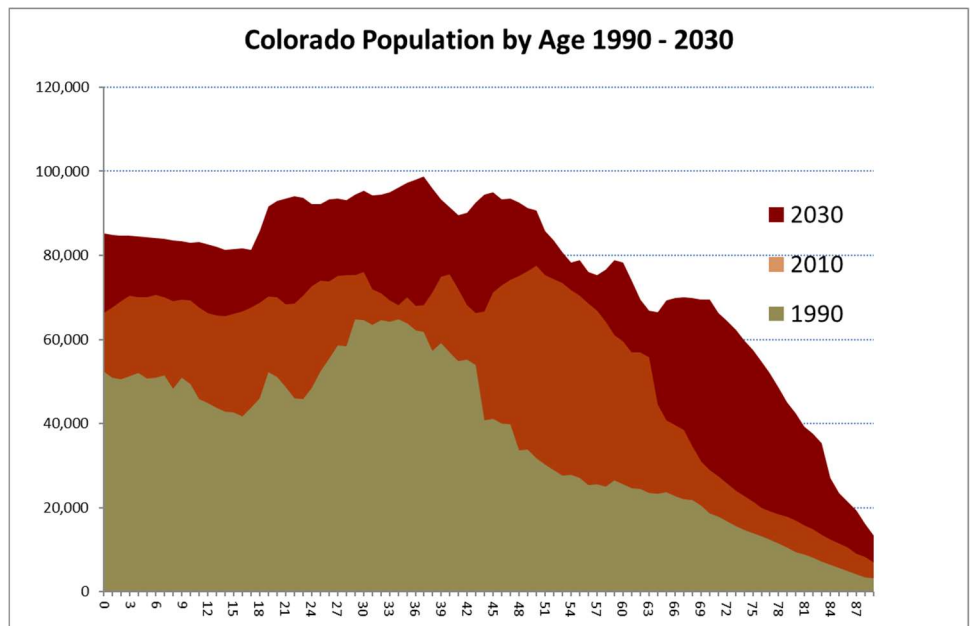
Aging in Colorado

Colorado, shaped and defined by its stunning landscapes, is quietly undergoing a steady and permanent demographic shift that will redefine it for decades to come.

The number of Coloradans aged 65 and over is projected to rise by more than 508,000 — an increase of 68 percent — by 2030. This trend, the result of a confluence of demographic change and advances in science, is one that states around the nation are experiencing. Between 1900 and today, life expectancy in America increased by nearly 70 percent — from under 50 years to nearly 80 years. This is one of the great achievements of the 20th century. Advances in medicine and public health have given Americans a whole new phase of life.

Living into one's 70s and beyond used to be uncommon, but now it is something a majority of Americans can fully expect.

These trends have long been established, though for the last 70 years they have largely been hidden from view by a phenomenon known as the Baby Boom. The huge post-World War II generation skewed our demographics toward youth. But now that generation is retiring and we are rapidly catching up with the trends. A new and permanent reality is setting in.



As this graph, generated from Colorado State Demography Office projections, shows, Colorado's population aged 65 and over will be substantially larger in 2030 than it is today. This demographic trend is not expected to crest for several decades:

While Colorado is still years away from fully feeling the economic implications of our aging population, it's important that we take the time to look ahead and understand the changes that are taking place. Colorado's population is aging, and with that comes many economic and social changes that need to be addressed. Colorado and its communities must be ready to confront both the challenges and opportunities this growth generates.⁴

This trend, too, will transcend ethnicity and income levels. In addition, state projections show the number of Hispanic Coloradans aged 65 and over is expected to grow nearly 200 percent between 2010 and 2030; and the number of African American Coloradans aged 65-plus is expected to grow by nearly

⁴ Colorado State Demography Office, Aging in Colorado Part 2: What Does it Mean for Our State? October 2016, <https://demography.dola.colorado.gov/crosstabs/aging-part-2/>

155 percent in the same time period.⁵ This will require consideration of equity issues throughout the goals and recommendations that relate to aging, race, ethnicity, and income.

(It is worth noting that the Colorado General Assembly charged SAPGA with focusing on issues facing Coloradans 50 and older. SAPGA's work and recommendations do concern all aging Coloradans, however, the Colorado State Demography Office and other organizations maintain statistics and reports focused on those ages 65 and older. Those statistics are utilized in this initial strategic plan as a reference point, but they do not circumscribe or limit the recommendations herein.)

The fundamental fact is that this new reality is not just about older people. The changes that are coming will affect virtually every Coloradan in profound ways. Workers will need to do a much better job planning for retirement, starting early in their careers. Families will need to understand the potential effects that caring for aging loved ones will have on work and home lives. Businesses will need to adjust to the challenges and opportunities presented by an aging workforce and customer base — as well as the needs of their employees who also are caregivers. Our education system will need to produce enough new skilled workers to support industries that serve aging Coloradans. Communities will need to rethink a wide range of policies and regulations that affect everything from the kinds of homes that get built to how sidewalks, transportation systems, parks, and shopping areas accommodate the needs of people with diverse abilities. The public sector will need to grapple with increasing pressures on their budgets even while the aging demographic slows the growth in revenues.



This effort will require a comprehensive rethinking of how Colorado supports communities, families, and individuals who will grapple with this profound change. For example, the growing number of older Coloradans will increasingly rely upon family, friends, and others to provide assistance. Informal caregiving, while normal today, will become a part of more Coloradans lives — requiring both employers and employees to adapt. Family members and others acting as informal caregivers in Colorado endured a cost of \$3.7 billion in 2015, including lost wages, forgone benefits, and other expenses.^{6 7} That figure is projected to grow to \$6.6 billion by 2030.

Colorado's aging population also will require communities to adapt physical landscapes and other systems to accommodate this change. Given that 87 percent of older Americans indicate they want to

⁵ Colorado State Demographer's Office projections, <https://demography.dola.colorado.gov/population/data/race-forecast/>

⁶ CHI, Putting a Price on Informal Caregiving in Colorado report, <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/SAPGA%20Caregiving%20Report.pdf>

⁷ CHI, Putting a Price on Informal Caregiving in Colorado, July 25, 2016 presentation, <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/Caregiving%20Presentation%20SAPGA.pdf>

age in place,⁸ our communities also will need to adopt strategies to enable this choice. According to an analysis by the Highland Group conducted for SAPGA, housing will need additional accessibility, including zero-step entries and configurations friendlier to aging bodies.⁹ Seniors also will need assistance moving around their communities for basic services. According to the Colorado Health Institute, which also conducted research for SAPGA: “More than one of four Coloradans over 55 say it is at least somewhat problematic to find safe and affordable transportation options. The rate increases to 42 percent for adults 85 or older.”^{10 11} Although the mobility challenges vary by region and city, Colorado will need to expand access to ride sharing, public transportation, and other services to help seniors stay connected, access basic services, and thrive.

Aging also will place stresses upon Colorado public finance. Not only will growing numbers of retirees slow the growth in income tax revenues, contribute less toward sale taxes, and pay less in property taxes — notably due to homestead property tax exemptions — but they also will require additional support through public programs, including Medicaid. According to the Colorado State Demography Office: “Those in retirement tend to pay less in taxes both because they’re no longer working, and because they’re buying fewer taxable goods. With the aging of our population, there is an expected decline in per capita tax revenues to the state and many local governments — although it’s important to note that an overall decrease in total tax revenues is not expected due to aging.”¹²

An analysis the Colorado Futures Center conducted for SAPGA found that reductions in older Coloradans’ contributions to state and local revenues, however modest, coupled with increasing pressure on virtually all state programs and agencies will pose challenges for policymakers: “The bottom line [is] aging will have a real but modest effect on state revenue growth rates. Because Colorado is projected to be a growing state, total revenue

Research Conducted by SAPGA

Colorado Futures Center, The Effects of Aging on Colorado’s Revenue and Expenditures: A View to 2030, <http://bit.ly/2fi5rXz>

Colorado Health Institute, Putting a Price on Informal Caregiving in Colorado, <http://bit.ly/2f8hQMj>

Colorado Health Institute, Creating Supportive Communities for Colorado Seniors, <http://bit.ly/2fzPg2y>

Colorado Health Institute, Improving Senior Mobility in Colorado, September 2016, <http://bit.ly/2fi5vXj>

The Highland Group, Housing and Care Facility Needs Forecast, Gaps, and Opportunities, <http://bit.ly/2f1HXFe>

Keystone Policy Center, Literature Review, Colorado Commissions and Reports, April 2016, <http://bit.ly/2fi0KwK>

Keystone Policy Center, Literature Review, Other State Reports, April 2016, <http://bit.ly/2fXewFb>

Keystone Policy Center, Literature Review, Colorado Legislation, April 2016, <http://bit.ly/2gizTG1>

Keystone Policy Center, Literature Review, Federal Legislation, April 2016, <http://bit.ly/2gi27zS>

Keystone Policy Center, Literature Review, Misc. Reports, April 2016, <http://bit.ly/2fhZIXm>

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To view other information and presentations presented to SAPGA, visit colorado.gov/pacific/agingstrategy/resources

⁸ AARP Public Policy Institute, What Is Livable? Community Preferences of Older Adults, April 2014,

http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/public_policy_institute/liv_com/2014/what-is-livable-report-AARP-ppi-liv-com.pdf

⁹ The Highland Group, Housing and Care Facility Needs Forecast, Gaps, and Opportunities, August 2016,

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/SAPGA%20Housing%20Report%20Highland%20Group%20FINAL%20BINDER%20August%2022%202016.pdf>

¹⁰ CHI, Expanding Transportation for Older Adults, Aug. 8, 2016 presentation,

https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/Transportation%20Presentation%20SAPGA_distribution.pdf

¹¹ CHI, Improving Senior Mobility in Colorado report, August 2016,

https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/Colorado%20Health%20Institute_Transportation_SAPGA_03August2016.pdf

¹² Colorado State Demography Office, Aging in Colorado Part 2: What Does it Mean for Our State? October 2016,

<https://demography.dola.colorado.gov/crosstabs/aging-part-2/>

will continue to increase, albeit at a slowing rate. However, at the same time, aging will place increased expenditure pressure on the state budget. The largest growth rates in the 65 and over cohort are projected to occur by the end of the current decade. This will place additional expenditure pressures on the budget immediately. While growth rates in the 65 and over cohort are projected to slow after 2020, many of the expenditure pressures will continue to increase as the full 65 and over cohort continues to age.”¹³

This pressure is most significant in Medicaid. As aging populations grow through 2030 and as the costs per beneficiary grow, the pressure on state finances will increase. “Of those served in Medicaid, just over 75,000 or 3.09 percent of the Medicaid population received eligibility as Adults 65 and Older (OAP-A) or Partial Dual Eligibles.”¹⁴ Yet, expenditures for these two cohorts represented 16.73 percent of total Medicaid expenditures in FY 2015-16. By 2030, over one out of every five dollars spent in the Medicaid program will be spent on the aged populations and total Medicaid expenditures for the aging cohorts are projected to grow from just over \$1.04 billion in FY 2015-16 to just over \$2.325 billion in FY 2029-30, an increase of more than 100 percent in 15 years.”¹⁵

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These trends have moved some in public life, the press, and elsewhere to ascribe foreboding monikers to Colorado’s demographic trend. Rather than accepting this negative vision for the state, the Colorado General Assembly and Governor John Hickenlooper created SAPGA to confront the challenges and seize the opportunities aging presents.

In fact, Colorado’s growing aging population will pay dividends for Colorado. Aging Coloradans, for example, are a tremendous resource. Their wisdom and experiences can strengthen Colorado institutions and provide crucial guidance across numerous sectors. Older Coloradans also play critical roles in the state’s economy — with Coloradans aged 50 and older accounting in 2013 for 45 percent of the state’s GDP (\$131 billion) and supporting 48 percent of its jobs (1.6 million).¹⁶ Colorado seniors receive relatively high marks for lower obesity rates and higher rank in physical activity.¹⁷ Colorado should capitalize on this trend, and maintain and improve the opportunities for healthy aging throughout the state.

Adapting to Colorado’s aging demographics and preparing for this growing segment of the population will help the state tap into older Coloradans’ insights and other assets. More importantly, SAPGA’s work has shown that Colorado can adapt to this trend — and ultimately make Colorado a better place for everyone.

¹³ Colorado Futures Center, The Effects of Aging on Colorado’s Revenue and Expenditures: A View to 2030, https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/CFC%20Finance%20Report%20for%20SAPGA_FINAL.pdf

¹⁴ The Congressional Budget Office glossary contains the following definition of partial duals “Dual-eligible beneficiaries who qualify to have Medicaid pay some of the expenses they incur under Medicare. For all partial duals, Medicaid pays the premiums for Part B of Medicare (and for Part A, if applicable). For some partial duals (depending on the state they live in and their income and assets), Medicaid also pays part or all of the cost-sharing amounts they owe under Medicare.” See <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/44309>

¹⁵ Colorado Futures Center, The Effects of Aging on Colorado’s Revenue and Expenditures: A View to 2030, https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/CFC%20Finance%20Report%20for%20SAPGA_FINAL.pdf

¹⁶ AARP, The Longevity Economy, Colorado, 2014, http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/documents-2014/LongevityEconomy/Colorado_datasheet_V1.pdf

¹⁷ United Health Care foundation. America’s Health Rankings® Senior Report. 2016. <http://assets.americashealthrankings.org/app/uploads/final-report-seniors-2016-edition-1.pdf>

A Vision for Colorado

Before the Strategic Action Planning Group on Aging could develop a plan, it needed a vision for Colorado in 2030 and beyond: Where do we want to go? How will we know when we get there?

SAPGA tackled this challenge by embracing the idea that a Colorado adapted for aging is one where residents of all ages can thrive — a place where people in every stage of life can contribute, can live the lives they want to live, and are respected and valued for who they are and what they bring to their communities. In terms of public policy, this means doing what we can to ensure a high quality of life for older Coloradans and their families by promoting health and wellbeing, fostering self-sufficiency, providing livable communities, and protecting the most vulnerable populations.

SAPGA also developed its vision for Colorado in collaboration with community organizations, public agencies, and others. SAPGA's members attended meetings throughout Colorado, listened to feedback from members of the public, and received presentations at its meetings from a wide range of organizations, thought leaders, and key stakeholders. SAPGA supplemented its work by investing in research from a wide range of Colorado think tanks and other research organizations.

To achieve this vision, SAPGA set eight goals for what Colorado should look like in 2030. These goals defined SAPGA's work and its recommendations. They provide the infrastructure — the scaffolding — of this strategic action plan for aging in Colorado:

- **Goal 1:** Colorado seniors will be able to live and fully participate in their communities of choice for as long as possible.
- **Goal 2:** Older adults will be able to stay engaged in the labor force and volunteer sector for as long as they want or need.
- **Goal 3:** Colorado seniors and their families will be more financially secure and prepared to meet the challenges of aging.
- **Goal 4:** Coloradans will be prepared for the challenges of caring for aging loved-ones and will be able to do so without endangering their own health or well-being or the health and well-being of the recipient of care.
- **Goal 5:** There will be enough skilled, educated and trained workers, paid commensurate to their abilities and training, to meet the needs of employers and industries serving Colorado's growing senior population.
- **Goal 6:** Older Coloradans will stay healthier longer through access to quality and affordable person-centered care that aligns with their preferences and values.
- **Goal 7:** All levels of government will meet their commitments to support older Coloradans and their families.
- **Goal 8:** Colorado will empower and protect seniors from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

These goals should inform policymakers' priorities and actions in 2017 and beyond. They, coupled with the recommendations in this strategic plan, set a course for how Colorado can ensure a high quality of life for older adults, their families, and caregivers. These goals also guide steps Colorado can take to help older adults remain a vital part of our urban, rural, and tribal communities and leverage their lifetimes of experience, knowledge, and wisdom.

SAPGA focused on these goals and vision for Colorado by working through a series of committees, which included: Workforce Development; Family Economic Security; Physical Community; Health and Wellness; Public Finance; and Supportive Community. Through each topic area, SAPGA endeavored to

find strategies to ensure Colorado is prepared for the needs and consequences of its growing aging population. This included ensuring the state improves the quality, effectiveness, and availability of services for older Coloradans and fully and sustainably funds essential senior services and support programs.

The legislation that established SAPGA directed its members to develop a long-term plan that can be expanded and updated over a matter of years. The General Assembly requested updates to this plan in 2018 and 2020 depending on the availability of resources. In the interim, SAPGA will continue to update its recommendations both in light of new information and research as well as the progress the state makes on these recommendations.



SAPGA's work in 2017 and beyond will include assessing the roles emerging technology and innovation can play in helping Colorado prepare for aging, working with seniors to support their own wellness and mobility, access to quality care including addressing the needs of those with dementia and Alzheimer's Disease, exploring how the private sector can complement public programs to support Colorado seniors, and elevating support for policies, communication, and practices that can better respond to the overall aging trend in our state. The Planning Group also will explore other issues directly affecting older Coloradans and potential avenues for action, including veterans programs and assistance, senior issues in the criminal and civil justice systems, access and barriers to participation in senior nutrition and wellness programs, and the intersection of these issues with race, ethnicity, and income levels in equitably accessing these services. SAPGA will continue to leverage its committees, organizations that serve older Coloradans, and partner with local communities to develop additional recommendations on these and other key topics and priorities.

This continuing work also will take into account the work of other entities in Colorado and beyond, whose work will affect Colorado seniors. These include but are not limited to the Colorado Commission on Affordable Health Care, the Colorado Department of Human Services, and the Colorado Commission on Aging. Their insights into issues such as the wellbeing of seniors to rising cost of prescription drugs holds tremendous value for SAPGA and Colorado policymakers alike. SAPGA intends to continue to monitor these other efforts to complement its future work.

The remainder of this section outlines the progress the Planning Group has made in understanding the challenges presented by the eight goals and the strategies considered for each. Some of these strategies form the basis for recommendation made in the next section; others need more work before SAPGA can decide whether they will form the basis for future recommendations. All goals and strategies are to be achieved before 2030.